

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 2495

As Reported By House Committee On:

Natural Resources

Title: An act relating to hunting licenses.

Brief Description: Allowing holders of big and small game hunting licenses to hunt unclassified wildlife.

Sponsors: Representatives Pennington and Benson; by request of Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Natural Resources: 1/26/00, 2/4/00 [DP].

Brief Summary of Bill

- Allows holders of a big game hunting license to hunt unclassified wildlife.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Buck, Republican Co-Chair; Regala, Democratic Co-Chair; Anderson, Democratic Vice Chair; Sump, Republican Vice Chair; G. Chandler; Clements; Doumit; Eickmeyer; Ericksen; Pennington; Rockefeller and Stensen.

Staff: Josh Weiss (786-7129).

Background:

Unclassified wildlife includes, but is not limited to, animals such as: coyote, opossum, vole, and nonnative squirrel. Unclassified wildlife does not include any animal currently defined as a game animal or as protected wildlife.

Prior to the merger of the enforcement provisions of the fisheries code and the wildlife code, anyone possessing a hunting license could legally take unclassified wildlife. The merger of these provisions created separate small game and big game hunting licenses.

Persons with a small game license are currently allowed to hunt unclassified wildlife, while holders of a big game license may not.

Summary of Bill:

Holders of a big game license are allowed to hunt unclassified wildlife.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This is a technical change that is necessary after the recodification of the licensing statute several years ago. There was mistake in the recodification bill from three years ago that would have allowed people with a small game license to hunt unclassified wildlife, while those that hold a big game license could not. This bill simply allows holders of either license type to hunt for unclassified wildlife. This is a correction of an unintended technical nature.

Testimony Against: The biological impact of this bill is not understood. This should be more closely looked at. These species are an important part of the ecosystem and the environmental impact of hunting them should be studied.

Testified: (In support) Representative John Pennington, prime sponsor; Steve Pozzanghera, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife; and Ed Owens, Hunters Heritage Council.

(Opposed) Will Anderson, PAWS.